THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) Development of only those inland waterways which are declared as National Waterways come under the purview of the Central Government. The development and regulation of the waterways other than national waterways is the responsibility of the respective state governments. An amount of Rs. 362.22 lakhs has been sanctioned for the project namely "Revival of Veli-Kovalam stretch of TS Canal" submitted by the State Govt. of Kerala. A sum of Rs. 65.30 lakhs has been released so far to the State Govt. to this project.

(b) The Government has approved an Inland Water Transport Policy according to which, Inland Waterways of India (IWAI) can enter into Joint Venture for encouraging investment in this sector. 17 priority projects were short-listed for private sector participation. Out of these, bids were invited for 11 projects. At present bids received for 8 proposals are under examination.

(c) The total length of navigable inland waterways in Kerala is 1548 Kilometres.

Payment of Provident Fund to Seafarers

2802. SHRI B.K. HARIPRASAD:
SHRIMATI SYEDA ANWARA TAIMUR:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have taken any decision on the Seafarers' demand for settlement of Rs. 92.73 crores of their Provident Fund money that got lost in a scam four years ago;

(b) whether a court had asked Government to come out with its answer on the demand of Seafarers' union by the 16th January, 2006; and

(c) whether Government had earlier committed to one-time payment of SPF money and if so, the details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) to (c) The matter for recoupment of the Seamen's Provident Fund is still under consideration. The Hon'ble Mumbai High Court had by its order dated 12.12.2005 directed the Union of India to take

appropriate decison within a period of four weeks. The Court had adjourned the hearing till 16th January, 2006. As the matter for recoupment of the Seamen's Provident Fund is still under consideration, the Government have sought the extension of time from the Hon'ble Court upto 11th June, 2006. Although the Government had not given any commitment for one time payment for recoupment of Seamen's Provident Fund, Government is considering ways to find a suitable solution.

Development of ports in Orissa

2803. MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:
SHRI B.J. PANDA:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government propose to set up a Centrally sponsored scheme for promotion of coastal shipping;

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether Government propose to develop minor ports to take over the load of container traffic of major ports; and

(d) if so, the details of minor ports that are proposed to be developed along Orissa coast for the purpose?

THE MINISTER OF SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS (SHRI T.R. BAALU): (a) and (b) The proposal is at the preliminary stage of discussion and no decision has been taken to set up a centrally sponsored scheme in this regard.

(c) and (d) Ports other than major ports are under the overall jurisdiction of the respective State Governments in whom the responsibility for development of these ports vests. Responsibility for development of ports other than major ports along the Orissa coast, therefore, vests in the Government of Orissa.

International Container Trans-Shipment Terminal

2804. SHRI B.J. PANDA:
MS. PRAMILA BOHIDAR:

Will the Minister of SHIPPING, ROAD TRANSPORT AND HIGHWAYS be pleased to state: